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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

CRAIGMILLAR CASTLE

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HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT SCOTLAND
STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

CRAIGMILLAR CASTLE

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1 Summary

1.1 Introduction

Craigmillar Castle is one of the best-preserved castles in Scotland. It comprises a complex of stone buildings at the heart of which, both visually and chronologically, stands a large, tall L-plan tower house. Surrounding it is an inner courtyard, defined by a rectangular wall (habitually called a 'curtain wall') with projecting round towers at each of its four corners, which contains extensive additional accommodation. An outer court, also walled, contains a ruined chapel and other ancillary buildings. To the south and west there are remains of contemporary gardens.

The tower house itself is difficult to date, with informed guesses spanning the late-14th to the late-15th century; the middle of that spectrum seems the more likely (see *Architectural and artistic values*). The inner courtyard was probably added soon after completion of the tower, and certainly no earlier than the mid-15th century. The outer court and gardens are equally problematic to date but probably belong to the later 16th century. The west range of the inner courtyard was much remodelled in the later-17th century. Most of the buildings survive to wall-head level, but only the tower house remains roofed.

The castle lies about 2½ miles SE of the centre of Edinburgh. Whilst modern developments have encroached on the hill on which the castle stands (Craigmillar Castle Park), the castle continues to dominate the skyline, reminding the visitor that it was once a rural retreat on the edge of Edinburgh.

The castle can be reached by public transport as many buses go along Peffermill Road and the castle is a half mile walk from the junction with Craigmillar Castle Road. There is limited parking (about 10 spaces) at the castle.

The shop and interpretative graphics around the site, were refreshed in 2012. There are toilets, though these are not fully accessible. The site has many difficult surfaces, different levels and steps.

There were 20,941 visitors in 2014/5.

1.2 Statement of significance

- Craigmillar Castle ranks as a highly significant site across a range of heritage values, including the extent and quality of its survival, architectural, archaeological and natural; its illustration of the development of a lordly residence through the later medieval and early modern period; and its associations with important political figures and cultural events in Scottish history.
- The tower house is one of the most complete examples of the early generation of this building type in Scotland, with numerous unusual features.

- The rectangular inner curtain wall, with its four projecting round towers and topped by a bold machicolated parapet, is of considerable architectural interest, not only in itself but for the fascinating details it holds, including a fine array of carved armorial stones, some of the best examples of so-called 'inverted-keyhole' gun-holes in Scotland, and remains of projecting balconies providing vistas out over the landscape.
- Craigmillar retains exceedingly rare remains of 16th-century gardens in Scotland, including a highly unusual fishpond ('fish stank' in Scots).
- The castle is intimately associated with Mary Queen of Scots, one of the most famous personages from Scotland's history.
- As a landscape feature, sited atop a prominent hill and uncluttered by later buildings, Craigmillar Castle is a significant built element in Edinburgh's suburban landscape.
- The many nooks and crannies, winding staircases and stunning views from the battlements make Craigmillar Castle a favourite with kids of all ages.

2 Assessment of Values

2.1 Background

Craigmillar Castle was inhabited continuously for over 300 years and during that period many alterations were made. Consequently, the various buildings and walls are not easy to date precisely, particularly the tower house (which architectural historians variously ascribe to any time between the late 14th century and the late 15th centuries) and the curtain wall (anywhere between 1427 and the 1510s).[1]

[1]See, for example, MacGibbon & Ross, 1887, I, pp. 188-202; RCAHMS, 1929, pp. 120-6, no. 156; Cruden, 1980, pp. 119-20; Gifford *et al*, 1985, pp. 538-43; Tabraham, 1997, pp. 96-8;.

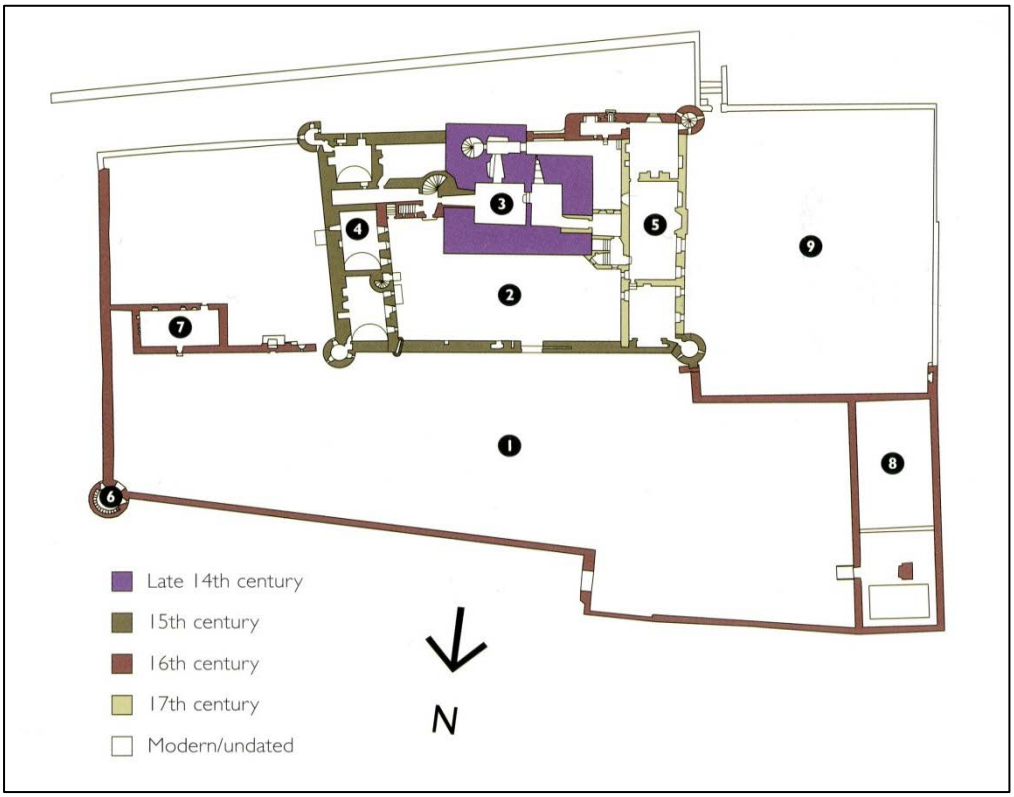

FIGURE 1: PHASED PLAN (TABRAHAM 2007, P.5)

Later 14th – later 15th century

The lands of Craigmillar were acquired by the Preston family in 1374.[2] It is possible that work began on creating the castle soon after, but the architectural evidence is equivocal and the tower house may not have been built until a generation or so later (see *Architectural and artistic values*).

The laying-out and construction of the inner courtyard and curtain wall most likely followed immediately on from the building of the tower house. Although the date of the curtain wall has in the past been dated to 1427, from a deciphering of an armorial stone above the entrance archway[3], this is now thought highly questionable and a date later in the century deemed more likely.[4] The 'inverted-keyhole' gun-holes are of a type that did not appear in Scotland until c. 1450[5], and although a number of them began as simple vertical slits subsequently reformed to accommodate a hole for the new-fangled guns[6], it is clear that some are original.

The curtain wall was topped by a bold, overhanging, machicolated parapet, and had projecting round corner towers at each of its four corners. The wall

[2] *Register of the Great Seal of Scotland*, 1882, vol. 1, AD 1306-1424, pp. 164-5, no. 455.
[3] Nisbet, 1816, vol. 1, p.305.
[4] Stell, 1981, p. 45-7.
[5] Tabraham, 1981, p. 55-72.
[6] Stell, 1981, p. 43.

had two entrances – a main arched portal facing north and a simpler postern along the east side. It was evidently designed to have buildings against its inner faces from the outset, one of which may have been an outer ('laigh') hall.[7]

16th century

The dating of the creation of the outer courtyard wall, and the chapel and gardens it enclosed, is also beset with uncertainty. The chapel has hitherto been thought to date from c. 1520, but the latest authority puts it later into the century.[8] The fishpond, to the south of the tower house, is likewise dated to late in the century.[9]

A possible clue to the dating lies in what seems to have happened to Craigmillar in 1544, during the Earl of Hertford's attempted capture of Edinburgh Castle for Henry VIII of England. Craigmillar itself was surrendered and, according to an anonymous author, the Earl 'promesand to keip the samyne without skaith [damage]'.[10] However, Bishop Lesley, writing in 1578, noted that the English 'horse men did gret hurt in the cuntrey, spulyeing [spoiling] and burning sundre places thairabout, and in speciall all the castle and place of Craigmillar'.[11] If this were so, then it may explain the rebuilding of the east range in the inner courtyard, which seems most likely to date from around the middle of the century. The Prestons seem to have taken the opportunity presented by the devastation to remodel their residence, including the tower house itself, to create more commodious and accessible public chambers and private suites (see *Architectural and artistic values*).

17th century

In 1639 the lands and castle of Craigmillar passed to a distant cousin of the Preston line, and in 1660 the whole property was sold to Sir John Gilmour, elected president of the Court of Session in the following year; he also purchased Inch House, 1 mile to the NW, in the same year.[12] Sir John had Craigmillar's west range in the inner court substantially remodelled to serve as a comfortable residence which, whilst not large, was provided with elegant and spacious apartments, and overlooked the formal garden to the west, probably also redesigned in the spirit of that age.

In 1687 a Presbyterian chapel was constructed in the outer courtyard for the congregation of Liberton.[13] This may have been an adaptation of an earlier barn.

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[7] Tabraham, 1988, pp. 267-76.
[8] Fawcett, 1994, p. 274.
[9] Brown, 2012, p. 135.
[10] *Diurnal of Occurrents*, 1883, p. 32.
[11] Lesley, 1830, p. 182.
[12] *Register of the Great Seal of Scotland*, AD 1660-68, 1914, vol. 11, p. 6, no. 20.

18th, 19th and 20th centuries
In the later 18th century, the Gilmour family abandoned Craigmillar Castle as a residence and retrenched to Inch.[14] Large sections of Craigmillar had already lost their roofs by 1789,[15] and thereafter the complex rapidly acquired renown as a Romantic ruin, a reputation suitably enhanced when, in 1813, a human skeleton was discovered immured upright in the east range cellars.[16]

In 1949 Craigmillar Castle was placed in state care.[17]

2.2 Evidential values

Past discoveries
Despite the fact that the castle has been of antiquarian interest for over 200 years[18], little archaeological investigation seems to have taken place other than work associated with rubble-clearance associated with masonry consolidation following the property's transfer into state care in 1949.[19] Even these seem to have discovered little of interest and few artefacts. Other than the macabre discovery of a skeleton in a vault in 1813, the chance-find of a cross-bow in an 'underground passage' near the outer wall, whose location is unfortunately unspecified, in c. 1860[20] and the unearthing of a silver crucifix of 15th/16th century in 1961 there has been next to nothing of interest discovered.

Future potential
This dearth of exploration strongly suggests that the archaeological potential of the castle is extremely high. This is likely to be especially true of the outer areas of the complex, where garden terracing may well seal earlier deposits. An area of probably outstanding archaeological potential has to be the garden area lying to the south of the tower house; this has the potential to add considerably to our overall understanding of the development and design of formal garden landscapes in late medieval/early modern Scotland.

In addition to buried archaeology there is likely to be considerable potential for standing building archaeological study, given the substantial, multi-period upstanding remains. One area in particular has the potential to add substantially to our understanding of the development of the castle – the curtain wall, variously dated to between 1427 and the early 16th century. A visual examination of the 'inverted-keyhole' gun-holes in the curtain's projecting towers (see *Architectural and artistic values*) shows that some, at least, are a re-fashioning of simple vertical slits (as was found also to be the case with the gunhole above the door into **Smailholm Tower**); a more detailed examination may solve the riddle of the curtain wall's dating.

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[14] Gifford *et al*, 1985, p. 539.
[15] Grose, 1789, pp. 49-50, pls. 1 & 2.
[16] *Scottish Chronicle*, 1813, p. 554.
[17] NRS, 1942-9. MW.1.1360 (SC 22185/3a).
[18] See, eg, Grose, 1789, vol. I, pp. 49-50, pls. 1 & 2; Anon, 1794.
[19] See Cruden, 1957, p. 37.
[20] *PSAS*, 1862, 3, p. 489.

Another area of study for evidence is the plethora of heraldic stones dotted about the walls. These too have the potential to add considerably to our understanding of the development of the castle over time.[21]

Beyond the limits of the property in care lies a largely undeveloped landscape, known today as Craigmillar Castle Park and now in the ownership of City of Edinburgh Council. Survey work (1996) demonstrated that the area has much surviving in the way of tree-lined avenues and other relict features, which would repay more detailed investigation, thereby adding considerably to our understanding of the castle in its wider environment.

2.3 Historical values

Craigmillar Castle was used as a residence over the course of four centuries, from the 15th to the 18th centuries, by two families – the Prestons and the Gilmours. For both, Craigmillar was not their sole, or primary, residence; those lay in the heart of Edinburgh. However, in the absence of documentary sources, it is not possible to determine precisely how either family utilised Craigmillar.

The Prestons and Craigmillar

Craigmillar Castle was built by the Prestons and occupied by them for a little over 200 years. They were not in the upper echelons of the nobility, unlike the majority of builders of 15th-century tower-house residences, but lesser landowners (from Preston in East Lothian) who became leading members of Edinburgh's burgess class. This makes the castle somewhat unusual, although the Prestons were particularly highly favoured by the burgesses of Scotland's *de facto* 'capital', and rose to be elected provost on several occasions.[22]

Craigmillar Castle was the Prestons' country retreat, or 'villa suburbana', suitably distanced from the noise, bustle and stench of the city but still close enough to be 'of' it. (The Preston family's town house was in the High Street, directly opposite St Giles' Church, on the site where the City Chambers now stands).[23] The castle's location made it ideal for relaxation and recuperation - and scheming, as it transpired. It was probably these qualities that made it attractive not only to the Prestons themselves but also to royalty. James V, Mary and James VI each availed themselves of it. Therefore, Craigmillar Castle demonstrates the aspirations and lifestyle of a leading member of Scotland's burgess community from the mid-1400s to the late-1500s.

The complex of buildings clearly demonstrates how aspiration and lifestyle altered through time. The original castle probably comprised a tower house at its core surrounded by a close, or court, housing other buildings and enclosed within a secure wall of middling strength. The tower house served as the family's private residence, restricted to their inner household and honoured

[21] Zeune, 1992, pp. 41-57.
[22] Lee, S. (ed), 1896, vol. 46.
[23] Grant, n.d., (1885?), p. 204.

guests. The most important building within the close would have been an outer hall for more public receptions and entertainments.[24] That outer hall has not survived because of subsequent major structural changes; however, there is evidence pointing to it having stood on the site now occupied by the 17th-century Gilmour Lodging.[25] Craigmillar has the potential to illustrate this dual-lifestyle lived by those fortunate enough to have the means to aspire to it.

The tower house survives, albeit somewhat altered, and its layout and arrangement of rooms is highly instructive of how lordly life was conducted in the later medieval period (see *Architectural and artistic values*). The fact that the tower house had a kitchen on the first floor, next to the hall, makes it particularly unusual for most 15th-century tower houses (eg, **Crichton**) lacked this facility.

The manner in which the original tower-house castle was modified in the 16th century illustrates the 'direction of travel' lordly residential life was taking – from one where room was stacked upon room to a more horizontal, interlinked arrangement. The remains of two balconies dating from this time, giving the residents views to the south, over their pleasance or garden, and east towards their ancestral heartland in East Lothian, complement other details (eg, the survival of wall and ceiling decoration in the hall) in pointing to a residential life far removed from the traditionally-held one where warfare and intrigue predominated.

One of the most obvious survivals that gives an indication as to the activities and diversions of lordly life are the 'yards', or garden courts, around the inner court. Although they are now almost entirely devoid of their ancillary buildings and structures, garden layouts and planting regimes, they hint at a much more complex building plan than we habitually assume. A unique survival is the fishpond in the south garden, with its fascinating P-shaped form (for Preston), hinting at the former glory of the castle's surroundings.

The Gilmours and Craigmillar

The Gilmours' purchase of the Craigmillar estate in 1660 resulted in a significant remodelling of the castle. (Note: The Gilmour purchase included also the tower-house castle at nearby Inch, where they also made alterations; however, it is not clear what use they made of the two properties).[26]

The work at Craigmillar provides evidence of the progress made in Scottish residential lordly living since the 16th century.[27]Although Sir John Gilmour built his new house within the 15th-century curtain wall, he clearly viewed the latter as an antiquity, to cherish and preserve to an extent but of no practical value. The large size of the windows that he opened up through the ancient curtain wall is evidence of that. Also, there was no attempt to retain any of the original crenellations atop his new residence; only those on the adjacent round towers

[24] Tabraham, 1997, pp. 80-2.
[25] Tabraham, 2007, pp. 14-15.
[26] Gifford *et al*, 1984, pp. 585-6.
[27] See, eg, McKean, 2001, pp. 235-58.

were kept. In this, Sir John Gilmour was following the fashion of his peers. Sir Robert Kerr, for example, writing in 1632 to his son when they were considering modernising the House of Ancram, beside Jedburgh, encouraged him: 'By any means, do not take away the battlement […] for that is the grace of the house, and makes it look like a castle, and hence so noblest".[28] The interior of the new residence demonstrates a more self-contained, integrated living style, with little attempt to include the old tower house in the principal accommodation.

Associative
There are two historical figures with whom Craigmillar Castle has a particularly close association – Sir William Preston and Queen Mary. Undoubtedly the most important in the minds of visitors is Queen Mary.

Queen Mary and Craigmillar
There are three clear associations with Mary.

Firstly, Craigmillar was one of the sites that suffered in the 'Wars of the Rough Wooing' (1544-51). These began when Henry VIII of England pressured Scotland to ratify the Treaty of Greenwich (1543) that stipulated a betrothal between the infant Mary and his son Edward. When the Scottish Parliament rejected it, Henry declared war. During the first invasion, the Earl of Hertford, Prince Edward's uncle, led troops north with instructions from Henry to burn and 'so deface it [Edinburgh] as to leave a memory for ever of the vengeance of God upon their falsehood and disloyalty'.[29]. On 8 May 1544 Craigmillar Castle was surrendered with the understanding it would be spared, but the army still 'brunt and destroyit the said hous', although this was self-evidently an exaggeration.[30]

Secondly, there is wide acceptance that Mary, following her return from France in 1561, spent considerable time at Craigmillar, as guest of Sir Simon (IV) Preston, even though there is record only of two stays; the area known as 'Little France'[31], to the south of Craigmillar, is said to take its name from the large entourage Mary brought with here when staying in the castle.

The first occasion was over the two days of 5th and 6th September 1563, during which Thomas Randolph, the English ambassador, delivered warnings to her regarding the various European marriages she was contemplating.[32]

However, it is Mary's second recorded visit, in November 1566 for a fortnight, that has led to the most resonant historic association of Craigmillar Castle, for it was during that time that the so-called 'Craigmillar Bond' was agreed. When

[28] *Correspondence of the Earls of Ancram and Lothian*, ed. D. Laing (Edinburgh, 1875, p. 64).
[29] Henry VIII: April 1544, 1-10: *Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, Henry VIII*, 1903, vol. 19, pt. 1: January-July 1544, no. 314.
[30] *Diurnal of Occurrents*, 1833, p. 32.
[31] The term 'Little France', for the area occurs in Blaeu's *Atlas of Scotland* of 1654 (Blaeu & Blaeu 1654, 4-5) http://maps.nls.uk/atlas/blaeu/page.cfm?id=1002.
[32] Furgol, 1987, 1:C9; Elizabeth: September 1563, *Calendar of State Papers, Scotland* (1900): vol. 2: AD 1563-69, no. 28.

Mary arrived (20 November), it was at the culmination of a tumultuous year – the murder in March of David Rizzio, her secretary, in her presence by her husband, Darnley; the birth in June of her only child, Prince James, after a long and difficult labour, and her serious illness at Jedburgh in October, that almost killed her. After being at Craigmillar for a week Mary fell seriously ill again and was reported by the French Ambassador to have constantly repeated the refrain 'I could wish to be dead'.[33] Along with Mary were her entourage of lords – including her half-brother, the earl of Moray, the earls of Huntly, Argyll and Bothwell, and Lord Maitland, her secretary. The story goes that they discussed Darnley's situation with Mary and, either with or without her knowledge, decided to have him murdered and signed a 'band' (bond) to this end at Craigmillar; hence the 'Craigmillar Bond'. No copy of that bond survives, and most historians now doubt it ever existed.

Perhaps the best example of the 'Mary' effect on Craigmillar Castle came in 1776 with the publication of J. Pinkerton's poem 'Craigmillar Castle: An Elegy', in which the following stanza says it all:

'That chamber, where the queen, whose charms divine,
Made wond'ring nations own the pow'r of love,
Oft bathed her snowy limbs in sparkling wine,
Now proves a lonely refuge for the dove.'

Sir William Preston and Craigmillar

The other significant association with the castle is of course the Preston family, who owned it, and the barony lands about it, from 1374 to 1660. They were prominent in the burgess community of Edinburgh, and several served as provosts. However, two in particular stand out for special mention.

The first is Sir William Preston, lord from 1426 to 1453. He became something of a local celebrity and the toast of Edinburgh civic and religious life when in *c*. 1450 he returned from a visit to France with a reliquary he had purchased containing an arm-bone of the burgh's patron saint, St. Giles, and presented it to the high kirk of St. Giles, without conditions. Because of this selfless act, Sir William was held in such high esteem by his fellow burgesses that when he died they voluntarily undertook to build an aisle on the south side of the church in his honour.[34] The Preston Aisle is still there.

The second is Sir William's grandson, Sir Simon (III), whose links to royalty and stanch support of the monarchy were demonstrated on several occasions. Most famously, he was implicated in the death of John Stewart, earl of Mar, brother of James III. The king had tasked Sir Simon with holding his brother in close confinement, which he duly did, at Craigmillar, in 1479. Sometime later Sir Simon arranged for the earl to be taken to a house in the Canongate and while he was there he had his throat cut.[35]

[33] Keith, 1844, pp. xcvi-xcvii.
[34] *Registrum Cartarum Ecclesie Sancti Egidii de Edinburgh*, 1859, pp. xvi-xvii & 106-7.
[35] Lesley 1830, p. 43.

2.4 Architectural and artistic values

The architectural significance of Craigmillar Castle has altered in recent years, as archaeologists and architectural historians have debated and discussed the real purpose behind the construction of tower-house castles.[36] Craigmillar continues to remain a property where we can best 'study the conceptions that governed the lay-out of a large baronial residence in the later medieval and earlier Renaissance periods'.[37] However, it has veered dramatically from being viewed as a dwelling shaped by military needs, as exemplified by Simpson in the 1954 guidebook:

'the historic interest of Craigmillar is exceeded by its importance as a major specimen of medieval military architecture. In this connection its special significance was first pointed out, about the middle of the last century, by John Hill Burton, who remarked that 'there is, perhaps, no other instance in Scotland of a family mansion so systematically built on the principles of fortification in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries'.[38]

to being seen as overwhelmingly a comfortable domestic construction, as advocated by Fawcett:

'comparison reinforces the first impression that, while the defences at Dalhousie and Craigmillar would be of some use in the case of an attack by an offended neighbour, they were not designed as serious artillery defences. They were, like the angle towers at Balvenie and Edzell, part of the architectural vocabulary of a landholder who wished there to be no doubt about his right to surround himself with such trappings.[…] Everything suggests that, by the end of our period [1560] domestic amenity was increasingly being allowed to dictate much of the layout and detailing of castles and defensible houses; but an essential basic measure of defensibility was retained, and it was still important to retain the outward symbols of aggression. The growing emphasis on domestic amenity is also apparent from the number of references to gardens at castles.'[39]

Craigmillar certainly seems to fit the bill. As Dunbar notes: 'in a society which was economically straitened and politically unstable, the tower house struck just the right balance between the claims of domestic comfort and those of defence.'[40] Therefore, it can be argued that the architectural significance of Craigmillar Castle is the way in which it demonstrates how much Scottish secular architecture, in the later medieval and early modern period (1400–1700), was shaped by two forces: (1) the quest for domestic comfort, and (2) the need for antique, military symbols of lordship to reinforce a lord's right to rule.

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[36] For the most recent reassessments, see *Tower Studies 1 & 2*, 2015.
[37] Simpson, 1954, p.4.
[38] *Ibid*, p. 5.
[39] Fawcett, 1994, 277.
[40] Dunbar, 1966, p. 37.

Craigmillar possesses important features that reinforce this 'quest for domestic comfort', including most notably the garden layouts and surrounding parkland. They include an ornamental fishpond that is unique in Scotland, if not Britain.

The tower house

The tower house is a fascinating, if somewhat puzzling, structure, conforming by and large to the normal pattern of the first generation of Scottish tower houses , but possessing numerous unusual features. L-shaped on plan and rising to over 17m high, its main block houses four storeys; two stone vaults separate the bottom two from the upper two, and the upper two from the roof. The unusual features include: (1) the defensive provision in front of the entrance in the south-east jamb (a curious deep, rock-cut chasm originally spanned by a removable timber deck); (2) the space above the vestibule, likewise floored with timber decking ; (3) the change in direction part-way up of the spiral access stair in that jamb; (4) the provision of a kitchen beside the hall, and (5) the ill-lit, unheated room above the hall, which begs the question to what use it was put; it seems most unlikely to have provided lordly living space. Parallels for these oddities are to be found elsewhere - eg, the decked flooring over the vestibule is evidenced in **David's Tower**, in **Edinburgh Castle** [41] and the provision of a fireplace at Neidpath Castle,[42] both securely dated to the later 14th century This would seem the most likely date for Craigmillar's construction also, were it not for the fireplace in the hall whose form and detail is deemed to be more like the fireplace in Borthwick Castle (Midlothian), securely dated to the 1430s.[43]

A feature of particular artistic interest is the painted decoration on the stone corbels that supported the timber ceiling over the hall. This comprises a pattern of coloured chevrons, which would presumably have continued onto the ceiling itself. Robert Billings' illustration (c. 1840) of the hall shows further decorative details on the soffit of the east window embrasure, suggesting that the entire hall was brightly decorated (though it must be stressed that the painted decoration is not necessarily the same date as the tower's construction).[44]

The tower house demonstrates how attempts were made to make it more amenable and accessible over time. For example, the windows in the hall were enlarged, and new door openings were forced through the east and walls to facilitate access to the adjacent ranges of accommodation.

Inner curtain wall

The inner curtain wall is easily the most memorable architectural feature of the whole complex. It is a structure with a bold simplicity of straight walls

[41] RCAHMS, 1951, pp. 15-18.
[42] RCAHMS, 1967, II, pp. 243-57.
[43] Gifford *et al*, 1986, 539. However, Cruden (1980, p. 119) argues that the shafts and bases supporting the lintel are of the late 14th century and draws a parallel with the fireplace in the lord's hall in **Doune Castle**.
[44] Billings, 1845, vol. 1, p. 108

punctuated by projecting circular towers at the corners, the whole construction majestically topped by an attractive open machicolated wall-head carried on a double row of corbels around its entire length. Whilst it clearly served some defensive role, the lack of other defensive measures (e.g. a gatehouse and barbican) and the fact that the inside walls were lined with ranges of buildings, suggests that the primary motivation for its design was aesthetic not military. The questionable dating of this curtain wall, more so even than the dating of the tower house, is perhaps the castle's greatest architectural conundrum. If it was built in 1427 (the date recorded on the armorial plaque above the entrance in the early 19th century), then it makes it Scotland's oldest 'artillery fortification', pre-dating Threave Castle's 'artillery house' by 20 years (but see above re questioning of the 1427 date).

The wall's most diagnostic features are: (1) its 'inverted-keyhole' gun-holes, and (2) the machicolated parapet. Both are perfectly acceptable for the first half of the 15th century – the gun-hole form and machicolations had both appeared by 1400 – for example, the gun-holes at Bodiam (Sussex) and the Cow Tower, (Norwich)[45], and the machicolations at Pierrefonds, France).[46] The most closely dated Scottish machicolations are those atop the Douglas Tower at **Bothwell Castle**, built for Archibald, 4th Earl of Douglas (killed 1424).[47] On balance, a date in the first half of the 15th century seems perfectly plausible for Craigmillar's curtain wall. However, as has already been stressed many of the gun-holes are obviously secondary (that is, they were created from simple vertical slits).

Perhaps we should no longer refer to this curtain wall as an 'artillery fortification' *per se*, but as a courtyard wall containing gun-holes. For that was its chief purpose evidently, as a suitably impressive wall, particularly when viewed externally, that screened, defined and enclosed the inner court, wherein the lord's most important buildings – namely his tower and hall – stood.[48] Indeed, rather than seeing the curtain wall as a later development, perhaps we should see it as an integral element in the creation of the tower-house castle, its construction planned from the outset but following on from the completion (or near-completion) of the great tower itself.

The 16th-century remodelling

Craigmillar is of particular architectural interest for the way it demonstrates how lordly residences developed in the 16th century, moving away from 'verticality' to 'horizontality'. The impetus for this was the emergence of the 'state apartment', and the inspiration may have derived from the building of the palace in **Stirling Castle**, built in 1538-40. Here the royal apartments for the king and queen comprised a sequence of three rooms – guard hall, presence chamber and bedchamber – all on the same level.[49] The arrangement (variously termed antechamber/chamber of dais/bedchamber, or

[45] Saunders, 1989, pp. 19-21.
[46] MacGibbon & Ross, 1887, p. 197.
[47] Tabraham, 2009, pp. 14-16 and pp. 28-9.
[48] Tabraham, 1988, pp. 267-76.
[49] Dunbar, 1999, pp. 49-55. See also McKean, 2004, p. 67-8.

hall/chamber of dais/bedchamber) approximated to a reception, or gathering, room; a private but still formal room, probably with a state bed; and an innermost reception room.

The precise arrangement at Craigmillar is far from clear because of the ruinous state of the east range of the inner courtyard, but it would appear that the hall on the first floor in the tower house was retained as the antechamber, and that the two more private rooms in the apartment were formed in the east range, accessed through the slapping in the east wall of the tower house. The impetus may well have been the partial destruction of Craigmillar in 1544, during the Rough Wooing, necessitating reconstruction, and the growing requirement by the Prestons to provide suitably appropriate accommodation for the sovereign.

The 16th-century improvements included the provision of two timber balconies (also called galleries) providing residents and guests with air and fine views outwards. One looked southwards to the pleasance holding the fish-pond, and the other eastwards to the Firth of Forth. As McKean so rightly observes: 'we have underestimated the importance to Renaissance sensibilities of nature and of the view.'[50]

Gilmour Lodging

The lodging created by the Gilmours in the 1660s from the shell of medieval buildings in the west range, is a good example of how a medieval castle could continue to serve as a lordly residence in early modern times. The now roofless two-storeyed mansion, comprising a dining room and withdrawing at ground level and private chambers above, has nice architectural flourishes surviving, including an impressive entrance doorway, and sculpted fireplaces.

The outer courts and gardens

The outer area has some fascinating structures. Most notable is the 16th-century chapel in the east court, a two-celled building with crow-stepped gables, a straight-headed two-light south-facing window lighting the nave beside the entrance doorway, above which is a niche, now sadly lacking its image. Although unpretentious, the building is a rare example in Scotland of a free-standing, domestic medieval chapel.[51] That it stands so close to the core of the castle is also unusual, for most castle chapels were sited some distance away (eg, Crichton Church is 1 km away from its castle).

Undoubtedly the single most important feature of this outer area is the survival of gardens and terraces surrounding the castle's core. The west, walled, garden probably dates from 1660, to judge by the large windows provided in the west wall of the Gilmour Lodging; a sundial, dated 1660, now at Inch House but originally at Craigmillar, may well have stood here.[52]

[50] McKean, 2004, pp. 73-4.
[51] Fawcett, 2011, p. 404.
[52] Gifford *et al*, 1984, pp. 585-6.

Of much greater historic interest, however, is the garden ground on the south side of the castle. Although now hard to appreciate (chiefly because of the lack of archaeological investigation), this area is where the family took their exercise and indulged in sports such as hawking and archery; a fruit orchard extended eastward from it for two acres.[53]

The undoubted highlight is its most unusual ornamental fish-pond, measuring 75m by 20m and designed in the shape of a P for Preston. The bank around the pond was constructed so as to provide a path around the P, with two small platforms opposite each other on the stem to be used for angling or as stance for seats. There are similar platforms at the head of the P and, in the pond, two circular islands that could provide a nesting place for wild fowl. Late 18th century descriptions describe the pond as being bordered by a row of trees, with hawthorn bushes on the islands. What depth the pond would have been is not known, but it would have been sufficient for the use of a small boat.[54] It was clearly intended to be viewed from above, and there is evidence for a timber gallery on the south end of the west range, reached by a now-blocked doorway.

The fish-pond is certainly unique in a Scottish context. There are examples of fish ponds being formed in particular shapes for symbolic purposes. Brown notes that:

During Queen Elizabeth's Progress of 1591, Edward Seymour, earl of Hertford, created an entire landscape to stage an entertainment for the queen at Elvetham in Hampshire. This included the excavation of a crescent-shaped lake with three islands in it, a tribute to Elizabeth as Diana, the virgin goddess, on which a naumachia or sea battle was staged.[55]

Other elaborate water features are known, 'but none that celebrate the family and its ownership in this way', other than possibly in the fishponds adjacent to a garden at Kettleby in Lincolnshire, though these have not been confirmed.[56]

2.5 Landscape and aesthetic values

Craigmillar's excellent state of preservation, coupled with the variety and complexity of its buildings, makes it a most rewarding heritage attraction to visit. The visitor is rewarded with almost continuous changes in levels, unexpected twists and turns, and a variety of light and shade within the various spaces.

The views out from the battlements, particularly the wall-head of the tower house, are as good as any in Edinburgh. To the north lies the broad sweep of Edinburgh's Old Town with its famous Castle and Arthur's Seat, and beyond, the blue-grey ribbon that is the Firth of Forth, reaching way into the distance, to North Berwick Law 25 miles to the north east. The view south, away from

[53] Whyte, 1792, p. 329.
[54] Brown, 2012, p. 135.
[55] Brown, 2012, pp. 134-5.
[56] Brown, 2012, p. 135.

the city, whilst not as dramatic, offers vistas over the south-eastern suburbs to the green Pentland Hills beyond.

Craigmillar Castle is also most remarkably set, on the crest of a green hill fringed with mature trees. The castle, when inhabited by its lords and ladies, was ‘of’ the city of Edinburgh but not ‘in’ it. And even though the city has subsequently expanded to envelop the castle, the property still contrives to appear ‘rural’. Despite the encroachments to north and south in the last half century or so, the castle remains largely isolated and unmolested by the modern day, and contrives to retain a lordly majesty even yet.

2.6 Natural heritage values
To be assessed

2.7 Contemporary/use values
Since the 1960s Craigmillar has given its name to one of the more socially excluded areas of Edinburgh, and the level of vandalism the castle has suffered is a manifestation of this. However, since wholesale regeneration of the area began early this century, and particularly with the creation of Parc Craigmillar, the immediate environment of the castle, particularly on its north side, has improved tremendously. To the south of the castle the new Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh at Little France, opened in 2003, has helped raise the public profile of Craigmillar Castle even further.

That said there seem to be few local ties to the castle. The landscape immediately adjacent, Craigmillar Castle Park, is popular with walkers, dog-walkers and cyclists, but the castle itself, although a source of some local pride, is little used by the community as a social venue

3 Major gaps in understanding

- Was there human occupation on the site prior to the building of the castle? Only archaeological investigation has the potential to answer this riddle.
- When was the tower house built, and what buildings, yards and enclosure walls originally accompanied it? Here too archaeological investigation, coupled with standing building survey, may shed more light.
- When was the inner curtain wall built? A thorough inspection of the structure, including especially an investigation of the gun-holes and armorial plaques, may provide more clear evidence.
- What did the castle look like in the 1560s when Queen Mary visited? The so-called ‘Queen Mary’s Room’ in the tower house is most unlikely to have been used as such, and a more detailed investigation of the ancillary ranges, particularly the east range, may shed further light on the form and layout of the complex as substantially redeveloped in the 16th century.
- What is the origin and development history of the garden landscape around the castle’s core? Given that the extensive remains seem largely to have been little damaged by later developments, a detailed

archaeological survey and excavation programme would most likely reap rich dividends for an important aspect of castle life little explored hitherto.

- Whose was the mysterious skeleton discovered in the vaults in 1813? Without the skeleton itself, we will probably never know.

4 Associated properties

(other related sites) – **Edinburgh Castle**; Inch House; Liberton Tower and Parish Church; Preston Aisle, St Giles' Church, Edinburgh

(other 14th-century tower houses) – **Crichton Castle**; **Crookston Castle**; **David's Tower, Edinburgh Castle**; **Doune Castle**; Drum Castle; **Dundonald Castle**; Hallforest Castle (Aberdeens); **Hermitage Castle**; **Lochleven Castle**; Neidpath Castle (Peebles); Newark Castle (Selkirks); **Threave Castle**

(*other Scottish medieval/Renaissance buildings with painted decoration*) – **Aberdour Castle**; Crathes Castle; Cullen House; Culross Palace; Earlshall; **Huntingtower**; **Kinneil House**; **Palace of Holyroodhouse**; Stobhall
(*some other Historic Scotland castles with inverted-keyhole gun-holes*) – **Cardoness**; **Newark**; **Ravenscraig**; **Smailholm**; **Threave**

(*some other notable castle gardens*) – **Aberdour**; **Balvaird**; **Dirleton**; Drummond; **Edzell**; **King's Knot, Stirling**; **Tolquhon**

5 Keywords

tower house; hall; chapel; garden; dovecot; fish-pond; machicolation; gun-hole; Preston; Queen Mary; Gilmour

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Appendices

Appendix 1 – Timeline

c.1140 – David I grants land at Craigmillar to Dunfermline Abbey.[57]

1342 – Sir John de Preston, of Preston (East Lothian), acquires the estate of Gorton, near Roslin.[58]

1374 – John's son, Simon (I), acquires Craigmillar from William de Capella, and takes the title 'of Gorton and Craigmillar'.[59] He previously served as sheriff of Edinburgh (1366 and 1369),with a residence in Edinburgh Castle, and witnessed the building there of mighty **David's Tower**.[60]

1425 – the first mention of the castle, in a charter of Sir John Preston, Simon (I)'s great-grandson.[61] He dies in the following year and his son and heir, William, becomes a local celebrity when he presents to St Giles' Church, in Edinburgh, a reliquary containing an arm bone of Saint Giles, Edinburgh's patron saint, which he acquired during a visit to France c.1450.[62]When Sir John dies (1453) he is buried in St Giles' Lady Aisle. The following year the town council honour his memory by building a chantry chapel, the Preston Aisle, beside the Lady Aisle.

1479 – William's grandson, Simon (III), is implicated in the murder of James III's younger brother, John Stewart, Earl of Mar. After a short imprisonment in Craigmillar, Mar is taken to a house in the Canongate where he is murdered.[63]

1511 – James IV elevates Craigmillar to a free barony.[64]

1544 – an English army under the Earl of Hertford captures the castle, taking Sir Simon (IV) prisoner. Despite their promise not to damage the castle, they are said to have 'brunt and destroyit'[65] it. It is possible, however, that the remodelling of the east range to its present form is carried out as a result of this action.

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[57] Lawrie, 1905, 74, 336, no. xcl.
[58] *Register of the Great Seal of Scotland, A.D. 1306-1424*, 1984, 481, App. i, no. 111.
[59] *Ibid*, pp. 164-5, no. 455.
[60] *Ibid*, p. 779.
[61] *Ibid*, p. 5, no. 26.
[62] *Registrum Cartarum Ecclesie Sancti Egidii de Edinburgh*, 1859, xvi-xvii & pp.106-7.
[63] Lesley, 1830, p. 43.
[64] *Register of the Great Seal of Scotland, A.D. 1424-1513*, 1984, p.779, no. 3614.
[65] *Diurnal of Occurrents*, 1833, p. 32; Lesley, 1830, p. 182.

1548 – Simon (IV) accompanies the young Queen Mary to France, where he attends her wedding to the Dauphin (1558). He returns to Scotland with Mary in 1561, and serves several terms as Edinburgh's Lord Provost.[66]

1563 - Sir Simon entertains Mary at Craigmillar, during which the queen grants an audience to the English ambassador.[67]

1566 – Mary visits Sir Simon at Craigmillar, seeking refuge after a troubled year (the murder of Rizzio, her estrangement from Darnley, and the birth of her child, Prince James).[68] During her stay, the infamous 'Craigmillar Bond' – a murderous pact to do away with Darnley – is hatched, though probably without Mary's knowledge.[69] Following Darnley's murder in Kirk o' Fields (10 February 1567), Mary's reign spirals out of control. She surrenders (15 June) to her Protestant Lords at Carberry, not far from Craigmillar, and Sir Simon takes her to his town house in Edinburgh's High Street[70] (on the site where the City Chambers now stands) before delivering her to the island stronghold of **Lochleven Castle**.

1589 – James VI visits Craigmillar (October) and is hosted by David Preston. Whilst there, he receives a letter advising that the departure of his new queen Anna from Denmark to be with him has been postponed because of bad weather. James insists on going to Denmark to marry her there. He decides to go to Norway to marry her there.

1660 – a distant cousin of the Preston line sells Craigmillar to Sir John Gilmour, a leading lawyer and soon to be appointed (1661) President of the Court of Session by Charles II. He creates a new two-storeyed residence out of the former great hall in the west range.

1687 – a Presbyterian chapel, for use by the congregation of Liberton, is built in the outer courtyard.

later 18th century – the Gilmours relocate to their other Edinburgh property, Inch House, in nearby Gilmerton. In 1761 the castle is advertised 'to let', but by 1775 it is described as a romantic ruin in the landscape, an inspiration to poets and artists.

1813 – an upright skeleton is discovered in one of the eastern vaults.[71]

1930s – green fields north of the castle are developed for council housing, largely to rehouse families cleared from the slums of St Leonard's, in Edinburgh.

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[66] Lynch, n.d.
[67] Furgol, 1987, 1:C9; Keith, 1844, pp. xcvi-xcvii.
[68] Furgol, 1987, 1:D1, 1:D2.
[69] Dawson, 2007, p. 259; Guy, 2004, p. 283.
[70] Grant, n.d. RCAHMS, 1956, p. xxxviii.
[71] *Scottish Chronicle*, 1813, p. 554.

1949 – Sir John Little Gilmour entrusts the castle into state care[72] (In the previous year he sold Inch House to Edinburgh Corporation.)

1960s – further council housing is built to the north of the castle, ending in 1968 with the erection of two prominent tower-blocks.

early 21st century – most of Craigmillar's council housing is demolished (but not those tower-blocks) and a Council-inspired consortium, Parc Craigmillar, embarks on a major programme to redevelop the area, including improving the amenity of Craigmillar Castle. In 2003 the new Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh opens at Little France, south of the castle, further helping to raise the profile of the area.

Appendix 2 – Summary of archaeological investigations

Date	What	Reference
1996	CRAIGMILLAR CASTLE EXCAVATION NT 2882 7088 Three exploratory trenches were excavated by Kirkdale Archaeology in advance of the installation of a new septic tank and waste pipe, immediately N of the castle enclosure wall. Evidence of modern landscaping was found within the limits of the excavation, ranging from 0.5-1.5m in depth. There was some evidence of a metalled surface having been introduced within fissures in the bedrock, indicative of an external ground surface, presently obscured by modern landscaping. Sponsor: HS	(Ewart and Dunn, Craigmillar Castle Excavation 1996, 38)
1996	CRAIGMILLAR CASTLE PARK, CRAIGMILLAR CASTLE ROAD, FIELD EVALUATION; QUARRY NT 2900 7100 Trial trenching was carried out in advance of the construction of a new car park for Craigmillar Castle. Nine trenches were excavated, eight of which were archaeologically sterile. A small sandstone quarry was located, backfilled apparently in the 19th century. Sponsors: City of Edinburgh Council, Millennium Forest for Scotland.	(Collard 1996, 38)
1996	TREASURE TROVE 44 medieval coins near Craigmillar Castle	TT. 3/95

[72] NRS, 1942-9. MW. 1. 1360 (SC 22185/3A).

		Edinburgh District Council
1998	CRAIGMILLAR CASTLE, WATCHING BRIEF NT 2881 7087 A watching brief was undertaken during the excavation of an electricity trench outside Craigmillar Castle. The castle sits on the crest of a ridge, with the ground beginning to fall away some 40m to the E. Bedrock, a red sandstone, appeared through the turf in places. The short N-S stretch (3.8m long), dug by hand next to the NE tower of the castle, revealed below topsoil a light grey fine silt with much sandstone, mortar, charcoal, china, bottle glass, etc, throughout. This was present for the full c 250mm depth that this stretch was excavated to. The castle wall itself has footings that projected some 150mm out from the wall face, but here bedrock was only c 100mm below the modem ground surface, and the wall lay directly on this. At the N end of this trench, where it turned E, it was excavated by machine. The westernmost c 14m stretch produced the same silty deposit below topsoil for a depth of 400mm, with the trench bottoming on different material. At one c 9m stretch, a bed of loose pale yellow sandstone rubble may represent a foundation raft for the tower. The fine grey silt overlying the area is seen as probably representing 19th or 20th-century deposits, probably introduced deliberately as levelling material; the large stones present make an agricultural or garden soil unlikely. The sandstone deposit near the 16th-century NE tower of the castle may relate to this tower, but was not physically related to it in this trench. A further watching brief was maintained in February 1998 during the excavation of a cable trench in the outer courtyard. All trenching took place over previously disturbed ground. Sponsor: HS	(Stewart 1998, 35)
2003	CRAIGMILLAR CASTLE, WATCHING BRIEF	(Ewart 2003, 68)

	NT 288 708 A series of nine test trenches was dug in November 2002 in the field to the N of the castle to investigate soil porosity ahead of new drainage for car parking. Nothing of archaeological significance was found. Archive to be deposited in the NMRS. Sponsor: HS	
2007	CRAIGMILLAR CASTLE, WATCHING BRIEF NT 283 705 Small trial trenches were dug at Craigmillar Castle on 20 March 2007 to assess the nature of deposits under the gravel in the inner courtyard and in the drawing room. There appeared to be make-up deposits below the level of the courtyard, perhaps suggesting an earlier, lower level. Archive to be deposited with RCAHMS. Funder: Historic Scotland	(D. Murray 2007, 82)
2009	CRAIGMILLAR CASTLE, WATCHING BRIEF NT 2885 7091 A watching brief was carried out 16 February 2009 during the excavation of two small trenches for the base of a new bench near the dovecot. Upper landscaping layers of unknown date overlay demolition debris, which may have been added to the site during landscaping. Archive: RCAHMS (intended) Funder: Historic Scotland	(Radley 2009, 72)
2009	CRAIGMILLAR CASTLE, WATCHING BRIEF NT 2893 7091 A watching brief was carried out 24 April 2009 during the excavation of two small trenches for new signs near the ticket office. The trenches contained deposits rich in brick fragments. These deposits probably related to the construction of the nearby 18th-century Craigmillar Castle Cottages (NT27SE 5812). A rough surface in one trench may have been an earlier access road. Archive: RCAHMS (intended) Funder: Historic Scotland	(D. Murray 2009, 72)
2011	CRAIGMILLAR, METAL DETECTOR FIND NT 29 71 A Roman brooch and coin were found during metal detecting near Craigmillar. The small trumpet brooch is intact apart from the spring and pin, and has a full acanthus moulding (overall L 51mm). A silver denarius of Marcus Aurelius was also discovered. Claimed as	(Hunter 2011, 73)

	Treasure Trove (TT 44/11), allocated to Edinburgh Museums.	
2011	CRAIGMILLAR CASTLE WATCHING BRIEF & EXCAVATION NT 2882 7088 A watching brief and minor excavation were carried out 1 February 2009 on the East Range during the excavation of three test trenches. The work allowed the examination of previously undisturbed deposits and ascertained the floor make-up and the height of the vaults, prior to remedial works to prevent water inundation. Archive: RCAHMS (intended) Funder: Historic Scotland	(Fox 2011, 73)